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ABSTRACT

This booklet is a guide to establishing youth service learning councils. The booklet begins with a discussion of what youth service learning councils are and why they are a good idea. The following aspects of initiating the process of forming a youth service learning council are explained: facilitating a youth service learning council; identifying host organizations (school systems, nonprofit organizations, businesses and for-profit organizations); and raising funds (Learn and Serve America funds from the Corporation for National Service, other federal programs, foundations, local business and government, local service organizations, council member fund-raising, school-based entrepreneurial projects). The steps in forming the council are briefly described. Provided in a section on the process of training the council is an annotated sample agenda for an all-day training program for youth service learning council members. Council activities, including council decision making and the process of review of council membership applications and selection of council members, are discussed along with strategies for ensuring quality and service learning in mini-grants. A sample youth service learning council timetable concludes the booklet. Appended are a sample youth service learning council mini-grant application template and application form and a sample youth service learning council mini-grant review form. (MN)

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LINKING LEARNING WITH LIFE

Giving Youth The Power And The Money

A Guide To Establishing Youth Service Learning Councils

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Giving Youth The Power And The Money

A Guide To Establishing Youth Service Learning Councils

by Joe Follman

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What is a Youth Service Learning Council, and Why Have One?

To understand what a youth service learning council is, how it works, and its benefits, one must first understand the same things about service learning. An effective youth council is a powerful tool for promoting service learning as well as an embodiment of its elements. As defined by the Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform, service learning is a teaching and learning strategy by which youth learn and develop through active participation in organized service experiences that

Youth Ser•vice Learn•ing Coun•cil *n.*

1. A representative and diverse body of youth formed to administer youth service learning mini-grant projects.

2. A group of youth who design, disseminate, review, and select applications to conduct youth service learning to meet identified needs.

- meet real needs
- are a true collaboration between the "server" and the "served"
- use service both to apply learning and as a means of learning
- provide time for youth to think, talk, present, teach, perform, advocate, or write about their service
- foster the development of civic responsibility and caring for others

Service learning promotes youth leadership and provides a bridge between youth and their communities. It offers opportunities for career exploration and is an effective prevention and intervention strategy for youth at risk. Effective service learning projects have four components:

- Preparation—learning the context of the need for service through discussion, research, visits, presentations, etc.
- Action—conducting the service. The service should not be "canned" (i.e., completely predetermined), but should flow out of preparation activities.

- Reflection—writing, discussing, presenting, teaching, advocating, etc., about the service.
- Recognition—celebrating what youth have done and letting them know their efforts are valued.

Reciprocity is also key to service learning; those who receive services play an active part by defining their needs and how those needs are to be met. In good service learning, everyone is serving, served, and learning.

Just as service learning is a vehicle to meet the above goals, youth service learning councils are a vehicle to expand service learning. What makes youth councils special is that they use service learning to encourage others to do so. Put another way, council members teach others to fish while fishing themselves. As grant administrators, they

- prepare, conduct, reflect on, and celebrate service learning activities
- learn fiscal management, organization, and public relations
- are fully empowered with adult responsibilities
- become policymakers and decisionmakers and see the outcome of their decisions and policies
- advocate for service learning to their schools, peers, and communities
- help others become service learners
- learn about community problems and solutions
- become positive change agents in their communities and schools

The secret about service learning has long been out; those who participate in it are often helped as much as or more than those they serve. Thus it is also with youth councils, with the exponential benefit that council members actually bring to life dozens of new service learning projects. Their service learning breeds more service learning. The following list below shows just a few examples of what youth

mini-grant projects have done and what can be accomplished through them:

- tutored in use of technology
- were museum docents
- wrote and performed an historical play
- planned learning activities for foreign exchange students
- wrote environmental lesson plans
- taught cooking to younger students
- wrote and read books for younger students
- designed and constructed a playground
- conducted/wrote a town history
- developed portable museums on Native American culture
- conducted vermiculture project to recycle/mulch leftover lunch-room food
- led cigarette litter awareness campaign
- conducted information campaign on the importance of spaying and neutering pets
- built a greenhouse at the school
- held circus show for elderly
- were pen pals for elderly
- cared for a cemetery
- taught CPR and fitness to elderly
- made welcome video for new students
- taught conflict resolution

Need another reason for having a youth service learning council? The applications that the council members develop are usually very short and easy to complete. Of nearly 1,000 youth council mini-grants awarded through the Learn and Serve America program, for example, most have gone to teachers, student groups, and others who had never applied for a grant before. For someone with an idea for youth service learning, these mini-grants are a wonderfully simple way to get the seed money to begin.

So, how is it done? Where does the money come from? How are council members chosen and trained? How is service learning assured in the mini-grants? What prevents funds from being misused? And the biggest question of all, how on earth can kids as young as eight years old administer thousands of dollars?

This publication provides some answers based on youth council experiences in several states and communities. Council training agendas, sample applications, scoring criteria, tips for council members to use in making mini-grant selections, and other useful materials are included so you do not have to start from scratch.

Getting Started

Facilitating a Youth Service Learning Council

Although youth councils are models of youth empowerment, they need an adult advisor/facilitator. The advisor often writes the proposal or otherwise assembles the funds that councils initially award. The advisor plays other roles as well and has overall responsibility for the logistics that allow the council to operate by:

- helping form the council
- arranging council meetings and trainings
- arranging transportation for council members
- transcribing council decisions and keeping a record of council activities
- copying and mailing applications and other paperwork
- helping council members and awardees navigate financial processes
- ensuring reports from mini-grantees are submitted
- scheduling recognition activities

It is worth noting what the above list does **not** include as advisor responsibilities—deciding who gets the mini-grants, getting the word out on the application, or conducting site visits and application workshops; these are youth council member jobs.

Adult advisors pave the way for a council to do its work. They provide a sure hand and knowledge of financial, communication, and administrative systems unfamiliar to the youth. They are contacts for applicants and council members. The advisor serves as organizer, liaison, teacher, guide, and sometimes as parent. The job is demanding but also fulfilling.

Most advisors assume responsibilities of a youth council as part of a current position, whether as a teacher, district administrator, church youth director, or a nonprofit staff person. This way, the salary of the advisor is already paid. The advisor can also be a volunteer, and advisor responsibilities can be shared by several people. One council contained students from four different schools, and each school had an advisor.

The Host Organizations

The organizational home for the youth council and, more particularly, the money that will be awarded, has a large impact on the way things are done. A school-based approach results in school-based applicants and projects with a stronger service learning focus, while a community-based approach will tend to award mini-grants to the larger community and with more of a community service focus. There are at least three options:

School system

- Hosting the project within a school district encourages school-based service learning mini-grants. Applicants, primarily teachers and student groups, work within a familiar system, with funds being forwarded from the district finance office to schools that receive mini-grants. Recipients submit purchase orders for their expenditures. The school district maintains fiscal accountability, and requiring requisitions in advance virtually eliminates the possibility of misuse of funds.

Nonprofit organization

- Hosting the project at a nonprofit organization broadens community participation and can make it much easier to disburse mini-grant awards. The organization can simply write a check to the mini-grant awardees. At the same time, links with schools will likely be weaker, as will oversight of mini-grants. The best of both worlds may be achieved by having a nonprofit organization serve as fiscal agent for school-based activities. Such arrangements benefit from strong partnerships and regular communication.

Business/for-profit organization

- As with nonprofit organizations, hosting the project at a business gives greater flexibility, particularly with award disbursement, while broadening community participation and reducing financial oversight.

Deciding where to host the council may also involve no decision, as the advisor will simply run the project from where he or she works.

Raising Funds

It does not take a lot of money to have a mini-grant program; they have been conducted successfully with as little as $1,000. A council with just $1,000 would of course award smaller mini-grants than one with larger amounts at its disposal. However, many great ideas need only a few dollars. The youth advisory council in Charleston, West Virginia, awards mini-grants no larger than $400, and some projects are as small as $50. Once funds are in place, council members decide how much applicants can apply for and receive.

Even if you have a current funding source for youth council mini-grants, you could benefit from other sources to sustain the program. There are many ways to raise capital for youth council mini-grants:

Learn and Serve America funds from the Corporation for National Service (CNS)

- Youth councils fit perfectly with Learn and Serve objectives and criteria, and both schools and community-based organizations can apply. Contact your state Learn and Serve America coordinator or state service commission for application information. CNS can provide the names of state contacts for you; call 202-606-5000, ext. 136.

Other federal programs

- Mini-grants that focus on prevention and intervention might use funds from Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Juvenile Justice, Dropout Prevention, Health Education, and other federal programs. Mini-grants focusing on science could leverage funds from the National Science Foundation, the Eisenhower Program, the National Institutes of Health, and the Minority Science Improvement Program.
- There are federal programs in every locality that support community development, child care, people with special needs, out-of-school youth, the aging, the environment, health care, the humanities, and literacy. By dedicating part or all of council mini-grants to these particular areas, a project might secure these funds.

Foundations

- Both locally and nationally, foundations are available to support service learning efforts that are linked with the foundations' objectives. Many school districts have their own foundations; they may also be tapped for support, particularly when a council has shown success through improved education outcomes via service learning.

Local business and government

- Local business, industry, school boards, and government are sources for support. The Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, for example, had an existing youth council and paid for an advisor and all administrative expenses to coordinate it.

Local service organizations

- Service clubs and civic organizations exist to help their communities. Supporting a youth council is a natural extension of this mission. In addition to groups like Lions, Shriners, Sertoma, and Rotary, consider also organizations such as M.A.D.D., Boys' and Girls' Clubs, churches, Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, or Easter Seals, which may provide financial and/or other support to mini-grant efforts in their area(s) of interest.

Council member fundraising

- Having youth council members raise funds is an excellent service learning project in itself. While they can employ traditional methods—sales, car washes, and raffles—they will learn and probably earn more if they appeal directly to potential funders. Indeed, youth are more likely to be successful in many cases than adults acting on their behalf. Speaking before the school board, PTA, congregations, civic groups, chambers of commerce, and others, council members are living examples of what can be accomplished by supporting service learning.

School-based entrepreneurial projects

- Student-run businesses, whether related to industrial education, art classes, athletic events, or other after-school activities, can designate some of their earnings to support the school's mini-grant program.

Think creatively, and remember that mini-grants will meet needs for which funds—somewhere—have already been allocated. You need to 1) find out where those funds are, 2) show those who control the funds how service learning mini-grants will meet funding criteria via service learning, and 3) make manifest the benefit of having youth decide how to award the funds.

Forming the Council

Youth councils can vary greatly in composition. Whether a council represents a city, county, school district, school, church, diocese, or other community organization, it should have some basic characteristics:

- Members reflect the diversity of those they represent—diversity not only of race and gender but also of age, location, academic performance, interests, and experiences.
- Members have service—if not service learning—experience.
- Members are outgoing—perhaps an unexpected requirement, but council members must make decisions, debate merits of applications, teach others, and advocate for the mini-grants and service learning. Youth unwilling or unable to do these things will diminish the effectiveness of the council.
- Membership is voluntary.

Age is a consideration to a point, as early elementary school children would have difficulty reading proposals. At the other end, high school seniors are often so busy that they have trouble committing to a council. Another disadvantage of seniors is they typically serve only one year before leaving the council. Those extremes aside, councils have had equal success with youth from third grade through high school. Councils composed entirely of elementary school students work best when they are based at a single school. A council with youth who are several years apart might pair the older youth as mentors to younger ones.

Youth service learning councils are often formed from already existing groups, such as clubs, teams, church groups, youth boards, or inter-club organizations. For new councils, members are often tapped by recommendations from principals, teachers, and clergy and are

based on invitation. Serving on a youth council is presented, and indeed perceived, as an honor and responsibility bestowed on worthy or high-potential youth. Council members' participation is usually supported strongly by their parents.

Council size is as important as its composition. The number of council members is typically 10-20. This size allows for many opinions to be represented and enough members to adequately share the loads of review, public relations, workshops, and other responsibilities. At the same time, 10-20 is enough for there to be a workable group even if many members miss meetings or have to drop out.

While a larger council lessens the load on individual members, it can create logistical difficulties and make decision making cumbersome and time consuming. In one example, a very large council broke into three groups with each having a portion of the overall funds to control; this arrangement worked pretty well, but in most cases a council with more than 25 members has more disadvantages than advantages.

A council located at a single school or organization has fewer logistical challenges than one representing a city or county. It is easier to assemble students if they are all from the same school, for example. Many of the councils representing larger areas are forced to choose youth who have transportation at their disposal, which works but is not necessarily the best criterion for member selection. In addition, the advisor must sometimes ferry council members to and from meetings. In other words, a narrowly defined council is easier to coordinate, but is not as representative and will not have as great an impact as a broad-based one. Those forming a council must strike a working balance.

Training the Council

Once new youth council members have been selected, or an existing group has taken on the mini-grant effort, they must be assembled and trained. An effective training is interactive, empowering, and includes service learning activities. Most new members will have no idea what the council is about, so the training must cover all the bases. The annotated agenda that follows has been used with success and can be a point of departure for your training.

Please note: Many of the actual council activities are described in the sample training agenda, as council members need to be informed of and/or make decisions in these areas at the training.

Sample Agenda for an All-Day Training

It is recommended that the training include a well-planned service learning project unless council members are already experienced service learners. The advisor needs to understand the elements of service learning to ensure the project has council members practice firsthand what they will be scoring others on. This can be a challenge, but some easy-to-arrange examples include conducting oral histories with the elderly, doing a survey of service learning needs or opportunities in a community or school, reading to or working with young children in a school or preschool, writing letters for hospital patients, and other activities with clear learning and direct service components.

Getting students out of class can also be a challenge. Some councils have their trainings and activities scheduled on teacher planning or early release days, some hold them on Saturday, some after school, some in the evening, and some take students out of class. The training can be done in three hours if the service learning project is omitted.

The training should include a couple of team-building activities. The council members may not know each other well or have ever worked together before, and may huddle with those they do know. Therefore, team-building activities should get them to learn about each other, reveal themselves a little, be somewhat physical—standing, throwing, catching, etc.—and have them work together to practice what they will do as a council. Many activities can work effectively; the facilitator's role is to show how the problem solving, teamwork, new ways of thinking, and shared decision making of the activities relate to the work of the council. Times below are approximate, but total time allotted for the morning activities is about three hours.

Morning

Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

- The smaller the council, the more detailed the introductions can be. At a minimum, each youth should say his/her name, grade, and school.

Teambuilding Activity (10-15 minutes)

Overview and Purpose of Mini-Grant Project (10 minutes)

- Be sure to cite your funding sources, overall goals, and objectives. For example, if projects are funded by CNS, include background on the National Service Program, CNS, and the Learn and Serve America Program to give youth a sense of context.

What is Service Learning?
Elements of Service Learning (20-25 minutes)

- Keep this short and simple and make as example-based and participatory as possible, using the students' own experiences.

Difference Between Service Learning
and Other Service (15 minutes)

- Without making the youth feel inadequate about their previous service, draw on their participation in things like food drives, clean-up activities, and retirement home visits, and provide examples of how those community service or charity projects can be enriched and made into service learning.

Break (15 minutes. Have food.)

Teambuilding Activity (10 minutes)

Role of Council (15 minutes)

- In plain terms, describe what the council will do. That is, they will administer a mini-grant program worth XX dollars for service learning and make all the decisions about how the money will be spent. Tell them there are only two rules about the decisions they

will make regarding the mini-grant funds. First, they make the decisions. Second, refer to rule #1. They begin making these decisions now. Enjoy the silence and disbelief for a moment. Then, walk them through the rules, restrictions, and steps and the decisions they will make.

Developing the Application (30 minutes)

- Bring copies of an application outline—See Appendix A for a sample. Describe and explain the format and required elements, then have council members begin deciding on things such as whether they wish to focus all mini-grants on a particular area—such as the environment or history—or have a broad approach; how much applicants can receive; when applications will go out and be due; scoring criteria; and how many attachments applicants can have. Record their decisions on chart paper.

  The facilitator will take the council decisions and revamp the application template to fit them. To save time, determine the selection criteria in advance; the council decides how much to weigh/score each area. Having the council determine selection criteria can be done, but takes a great deal of time and does not expand their empowerment.

Review Sheets and Process (15 minutes)

- As with the application, bring a template the council can use and go through it with them—see Appendix B for a sample. Be sure the selection criteria on the review sheets are identical to those on the application. Underscore the importance of explaining scores on the review sheets: 1) scoring sheets may be made available to applicants after the selection and should therefore provide explanations to help applicants in the future, and 2) council members may not remember why they scored as they did without notes on the review sheets.

Selection Process (15 minutes)

- Give them recommendations of ways to do the selection, and have them decide which they will use.
- Consensus should be used as the method of deciding who is to be funded and at what amount.
- Council members need to decide whether they should excuse themselves from review and selection of proposals from their own schools, teachers, or friends.
- Recommend the council discuss proposals in order, starting with the highest average score, otherwise there is no benefit for writing a good proposal.
- Tips for review and selection are found on page 19 under "Council Activities."

Site Visits and Technical Assistance (5 minutes)

- As appropriate, council members may conduct site visits and provide assistance to mini-grantees. Discuss how this might work.

Getting the Word Out (10 minutes)

- Although the advisor will be notifying people about the availability of mini-grant funds and sending out the application, council members can and should play a key role in getting people to apply. Have them brainstorm ways of getting the word out and get commitments from members to carry out the ideas. Tactics may include creating and posting a flyer, newspaper stories or ads, intercom announcements, PSAs, word of mouth, application workshops by council members and the advisor, assembly announcements, and in-school TV commercials or announcements.

Lunch (60 minutes)

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Afternoon

Service Learning Project (About 2 hours)

- Adequately preparing for and conducting a good service learning project in two hours means the facilitator must have all logistical details arranged in advance. People should be ready to teach council members about their service, show them what they will be doing, and help them throughout. Give members the opportunity to "pre-flect" on the activity and discuss their expectations, knowledge, fears, and hopes for the activity.

  After the activity is completed, discuss again with the students and guide them through a reflection of what happened, how it did or did not meet their expectations, what worked and what didn't, their feelings, and (importantly) what it taught them about each other and how they work together as a team.

Brainstorming Council Project (15 minutes)

- Every council should also do its own service learning project over the next several months. Doing so will help them as reviewers and also to work as a team. They should decide what the project will be and how much of the mini-grant money they will need for it. While members need not make a decision about a project at this first training, it is a good idea to get them to start narrowing down some choices for their project. The advisor can help them and chart the choices.

Council Activities

Council Decision Making

In addition to having the council make its own decisions from the beginning, it is equally important that they learn **how** to make those decisions. Experience in Florida has shown that consensus is the only effective method. Councils that began by using the democratic (majority rules) process quickly alienated a minority of their members. It is particularly important that the selection process use consensus, so the council may speak with a unanimous voice on who is and especially who is not funded.

Some councils will not be familiar with the consensus process. One way to explain it is to draw a line representing the continuum between complete agreement and disagreement. Consensus-building is finding the point on that line where all council members can "live with" or abide by the decision of the group. Remind members that in their discussions and even disagreements they should respond to ideas, not individuals.

Council members should be advised to be as objective as possible both as reviewers and in the selection meeting. Their role is neither to advocate for nor attack applications, but to rate each on the degree to which it meets application criteria.

Unless there are only a few applicants, it is likely that not every application will be read by every council member. It will therefore be necessary for council members to take turns describing applications and reviewer comments to other members unfamiliar with those applications. Again, they need to be objective and not color the discussion with their own opinions before they have accurately characterized both the application and the other reviewers' comments. After council members have heard the application and review comments, the whole group discusses and decides on the application.

Notify applicants by mail of council recommendations. Applicants have a right to see their review scores and reviewer comments, so be prepared to provide this information in a way that protects the identity of individual reviewers. You may wish to automatically send copies of review sheets to all applicants. When council members know applicants will read their reviews, they are more motivated to write constructive comments.

Review and Selection Tips

- Hold review and selection on the same day. Doing so allows for reviews to be fresh in members' minds and for the advisor to be on hand to help out as needed.
- Have at least three reviewers for each application.
- Members should review individually so their scores will not be influenced by council peers.
- Rate each application against selection criteria—not against other applications.
- Review applications with an eye to what can be cut to make them better meet criteria.
- Explain your scores in each section, if only briefly—do not use bad language.
- Give priority to applications proposing service learning and meeting the greatest needs.
- Be sure students will be doing service—a project cannot be funded otherwise.
- Do not review or participate in the selection of a project you helped write.
- Remember that a great need cannot be met by a poor project.
- Ask for help if you need it.

- Strive for consensus—not just majority rule—in selecting applications.
- It is not council members' job to **add** funds or activities to a proposal to make it better meet criteria. When this happens, the idea is no longer the applicants', and it is unlikely that the imposed elements will be accomplished. The council may only **remove** elements and funding items—via their line-item veto—that do not meet application criteria.
- Be realistic even if applications are not.
- Remember that this is the taxpayers' (or whoever's) money and should be given out wisely.

Ensuring Quality and Service Learning in Mini-Grants

To help ensure mini-grant applications will be for service learning and not other kinds of service or other activities altogether, several steps can be taken:

- Include clear language and examples of service learning and its components in the application and require it in proposals. For example, an applicant shows good preparation by providing a clear understanding of the needs to be met through the proposed service learning project. Reflection activities are described, and the reviewer senses the proposed activities will lead to achieving the objectives.
- Be sure council members understand service learning, both through the training and by doing it themselves.
- Conduct application workshops for potential applicants.
- Make it clear to council members not to fund proposals that do not meet criteria. If funds remain, they can be awarded in a future round of applications. Their job is not to give money away, but to encourage the growth and application of youth service learning.
- Conduct, with council members, site visits to offer assistance and advice.
- Hold an end-of-project recognition event to which council members, mini-grantees, and their partners are invited. Have the mini-grantees give short presentations (i.e., reflections) on what they have accomplished. Information about the project can also be presented to an appropriate audience such as the student body, PTA or PTO, a teachers' meeting, civic organizations, or the school board.

Mini-Grant Reporting Requirements

There is basic information that every mini-grantee should report as a requirement for receiving an award. This information needs to be itemized in the application, can be submitted in the form of a short two-to-three page final report, and **might** include the following:

- project name
- applicant contact and address
- amount awarded plus any match/in-kind
- project description (need for project; participants and partnerships; activities; accomplishments and outcomes; description of preparation, action, and reflection)
- number of youth participants providing service
- number of people directly impacted (i.e., served) by project
- number of service hours provided
- calculation of value of service hours @ $5.15 per hour per student "server"
- a budget of how funds were spent
- copies of any materials produced as a result of the project

The end-of-project recognition will provide another opportunity for reporting on and reflecting about each mini-grant.

Sample Youth Service Learning Council Timetable

The following is a sample schedule for a youth service learning council mini-grant program, framed around the school year. The council itself typically meets three times for mini-grant processes and two to three times more to conduct its own service learning project. The dates presume mini-grants will take up to several months, although they can also be focused toward a specific date. For example, mini-grant activities could be required to occur on the National Day of Service or around the holidays.

September

- Select council members, arrange training and service learning practice project

Early October

- Hold training and practice service learning project, develop application and flyer

October to mid-November

- Distribute applications, application period, workshops, getting the word out by council members

Late November

- Application review and selection meeting, council selects its own project to do

Late November to December

- Announcing and processing of mini-grant awards

January to April

- Mini-grant period, council performs its service learning project

May

- Recognition ceremony

Ongoing

- Presentations by council members to civic and other organizations to raise funds for future efforts (this can be the council's service learning project)

Some Final Thoughts

As with service learning projects, no two youth councils are or should be exactly alike. The work of each council will reflect the talents and needs of its community, so the suggestions in this booklet should be adapted to fit those needs and talents. The empowerment of youth, however, should not be compromised; it is a fundamental element of both service learning and council decision making.

When properly selected, trained, and facilitated, council members take their service learning and fiduciary responsibilities very seriously. In fact, youth tend to follow guidelines more strictly than adults when reviewing and selecting mini-grants. And once they get a taste of making their own decisions, there is no going back!

Service learning is a tool for youth councils. Youth councils are a vehicle for and expression of service learning. Together, youth service learning councils can be a way for your schools and communities to empower youth, meet real needs on a wide scale, and make a positive difference.

Appendix A

Sample Youth Service Learning Council Mini-Grant Application Template

The text below is a sample used in training youth councils. Funders often have requirements on how funds may and may not be spent. The sample below shows required elements in *italics*. Areas where the the council decides (usually during the training) are marked with an asterisk (*). After members make their decisions, the facilitator revises the sample to create and copy the actual application.

Instructions

- Grants of $75* to $500* will be *awarded for youth service and service learning projects that meet local human, environmental, or community needs*. K-12 youth (two or more), student groups, community organizations, and teachers in Sample County may apply.
- *Priority will be given to service learning projects (projects for which service applies and is a means of learning). Such projects include preparation before service takes place (research, visits to site, interviews with those who will receive service, etc.) and reflection activities after the service (journals, reports, presentations, editorials, skits, songs, etc.). These plans should be described in the application.*
- *All projects must involve students doing service.* Projects can include (but are not limited to) environmental, intergenerational, historical, restoration, tutoring, coaching, interdisciplinary, or social/community needs activities. *Student proposals must have an adult advisor and involve at least two students. Projects need to be completed by date**.

- *Mini-grant funds can pay for costs of transportation to prepare for and perform service, teacher or staff extra duty time, substitutes, training directly related to service, and materials for service projects (including inexpensive, non-motorized equipment that cannot be borrowed from other sources—shovels, gloves, rakes).* Partnerships are encouraged to enhance participation and share costs. *Funds cannot purchase food, job positions, school landscaping, reward trips, gifts for service recipients, stipends for students, or electronic or motorized equipment.*
- The Sample Youth Council, consisting of 18 students representing all county middle and high schools, *will review applications and select awardees. Awards will be announced by date*. Funded projects must submit a final report describing preparation, service, and reflection activities; participants; accomplishments; and how funds were spent. Funded projects will also participate in an end-of-project ceremony and present on their activities.*
- *The application deadline is date*.* Applicants will be notified by mail of Council recommendations. Send applications to address*. For more information, contact name* at number*.

Sample Youth Service Learning Council Mini-Grant Application Form

The form needs to be clear and simple so students and teachers who have never applied for a grant before will understand it. Include pages for the narrative; this ensures all sections are addressed and allows you to define exactly how much space is to be devoted to each section.

Type of Proposal Check-off:

- ☐ Two or more students
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Student Organization
- ☐ Community Organization

Applicant _____

Sponsor _____

School/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Signature _____
(signature of teacher or principal sponsoring youth)

Address all of the following items, which are worth a total of 100 points. *Provide space for responses; the council decides* how much space.*

1. Project Needs and Objectives____ points*

- ◆ What needs will the project meet?
- ◆ What is the scope of the needs, and how will the project meet them?
- ◆ What will youth learn through the project?

2. Project Activities___ points*

- Describe the preparation, action, and reflection components of the project.
- Describe how project activities will lead to meeting needs.
- Describe any partnerships and how they will contribute.
- When will activities occur?

3. Projected Outcomes/Evaluation___ points*

- What will be the outcomes for the project and how will they be measured?

4. Project Budget___ points*

- In the space provided, list all budget requests by type with a short explanation of each item and why it is needed.
- Also include any matching and/or in-kind contributions.
- The budget narrative page should allow for both the amount requested and the amount offered in match/in-kind to be shown.
- Letters of support, charts, or other appropriate information can be submitted on up to five* additional pages.

Appendix B

Sample Youth Service Learning Council Mini-Grant Review Form

Total Score: _____ Application Number: _____

Applicant: _____

School/Organization: _____

Amount Requested: _____ Amount Recommended: _____

Criteria	Points*
1. Project Needs and Objectives	
2. Project Activities	
3. Projected Outcomes/Evaluation	
4. Project Budget	
Totals:	

1. Project Needs and Objectives

- Does the proposal meet real, identified needs?
- Does it describe the scope of the needs and how the project will meet them?
- Does it describe what youth will learn?

Score: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

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2. Project Activities

- Are the project's preparation, action, and reflection components described?
- How well will project activities lead to meeting needs?
- Are there good partnerships that contribute to the project?
- Is there a realistic timetable of activities?

Score: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

3. Projected Outcomes/Evaluation

- Are there clear measurable outcomes for the project?
- Are there adequate methods to measure outcomes?

Score: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

4. Project Budget

- Is the budget an appropriate use of funds?
- Does the budget clearly describe how funds will be spent?
- Are there matching and in-kind contributions?

Score: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Additional Comments:

Items that might be cut from the budget:

Reviewer Signature _____ Date _____

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About the Author

Joe Follman is Learn and Serve America Coordinator for Florida and initiated the Youth Service Learning Council concept there, resulting in 750 mini-grants since 1994. He is also the author of the *Hot Topics* publication, *Learning By Serving: 2,000 Ideas for Service Learning Projects*, and can be found at Florida State University's Center for Civic Education and Service in Tallahassee.

National Dropout Prevention Center

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